CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.572
9 August 1990

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 9 August 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Gheorghe Chirila (Romania)

GE.90-62528/2322B

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 572nd Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference is today continuing its consideration of agenda item 8, entitled "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament". However, pursuant to rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member who wishes to speak on any other subject relevant to the work of the Conference may do so.

On the list of speakers for today I have the representative of Hungary in his capacity as chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the representative of Switzerland, and the representative of Italy in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear-Weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons.

I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, His Excellency Ambassador Varga, who, as its Chairman, will introduce the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons contained in document CD/1027.

Mr. VARGA (Hungary): Mr. President, I have the honour to present the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons on its work during the 1990 session.

Before presenting the report of the Committee, I would like to use this opportunity to welcome you and express my best wishes on your accession to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of August.

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons has been made available to delegations under the symbol CD/1027.

By way of introduction to the report, I would like to point out that the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons continued the pattern of work established over the preceding years, that is, the bulk of the substantive work was carried out in two contact groups, respectively track A and B.

The Ad Hoc Committee's work objective for 1990 was to further develop the texts on the main elements for a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons and on the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities.

To reach this goal, the two contact groups used as a basis for work their respective texts contained in last year's report of the Ad Hoc Committee. They reviewed the texts with an eye for further enriching, developing or simplifying them as appropriate. The main objective was to find solutions to key issues, that is, to seek single formulations for the main elements of the future instruments, where alternative formulations had prevailed. It was also considered important to give attention to questions of verification.

(Mr. Varga, Hungary)

In assessing the results of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee for 1990, I should like to point to some movement in certain areas. Contact Group A has succeeded in eliminating most of the previous footnotes as well as in merging the previous alternative language into common language for "scope", "peaceful uses", "verification" and "other main elements". A preamble has also been worked out. Efforts were made to overcome the remaining political differences on key issues. However, the remaining footnotes and brackets in the record indicate that a number of important issues are still waiting for solution. It should be stressed, however, that a clearer picture of the main elements of a future radiological weapons convention has emerged opening up the possibility of advancing the negotiations.

There are less results to report on the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. Efforts were made to find solutions for the basic differences of view in the area of "scope", in particular, but alternative approaches to the convention have been maintained. Lack of agreement on the scope of the convention has consequently affected consideration of the other possible elements.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my thanks to Mr. Helmut Herzbruch, of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Mr. Hassan G. Mashhadi, of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who served as co-ordinators of contact groups A and B respectively. Their invaluable assistance and innovative efforts contributed in a decisive manner to the smooth running of the substantive work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

I should also like to express my thanks to the Secretariat for all the assistance rendered throughout the year. In particular, I thank Mr. Cassandra and Ms. Cummins for their help with the Ad Hoc Committee's work.

May I close my statement in my capacity as a national representative. I would like to express my thanks to all the distinguished colleagues who in their statements have said words of farewell to me. As I am leaving the Conference on Disarmament soon, I would like to reciprocate their kind words and wish to colleagues whom I am leaving behind all the best and much success in their future work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Varga for introducing the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons and for the kind words he addressed to the President. I would also like to congratulate him on the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 7. Since this is the last time that Ambassador Varga has taken the floor in the plenary of the Conference, I would like to wish him on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf all the very best for success in his future activities and private life.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador Ri Tcheul.

Mr. RI TCHEUL (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (translated from French): Mr. President, first I should like to congratulate you on the very competent manner in which you have been guiding this month's work of the Conference, which is taking place in an atmosphere of special expectation and interest.

Even in an international political situation tending towards détente and disarmament, there are serious problems in certain sectors and there has been no change in a number of disputed regional issues.

It is the threat of nuclear weapons that is the biggest threat to world peace and security and the existence of mankind.

The nuclear horrors ushered in 45 years ago still make mankind shudder today, and the enormous power of nuclear destruction accumulated by the fierce nuclear arms race keeps human beings in a permanent state of anxiety and fear. Today is precisely the forty-fifth anniversary of that unforgettable day when an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki mercilessly killing many Japanese and Koreans.

It is the common desire of all, regardless of differences of ideologies and régimes, to live in peace in a stable world, free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, effective measures to settle without delay the problems that haunt us all should be taken immediately with a view to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament.

First, the nuclear weapon States should reduce the nuclear-weapon stocks in their own countries and at the same time completely withdraw all such weapons deployed in other countries, particularly in non-nuclear States and regions.

This question is very timely today when it is said that the nuclear Powers are becoming reconciled and have entered a phase of nuclear disarmament and that the Cold War has come to an end.

The dismantling of nuclear weapons in other countries constitutes the best guarantee for peace and security on our planet, and nuclear disarmament will certainly offer an occasion for accelerating general disarmament and will be an important event world-wide.

Secondly, there must be a ban on nuclear tests for the perfection of nuclear weapons, which could reverse the nuclear disarmament process and sow distrust for nuclear disarmament practices; States which have such weapons should promise to implement the ban. If that promise precedes the adoption of the nuclear test-ban treaty as a whole, that will be an expression of political goodwill which will offer good prospects for the preparation of the treaty. With that in mind, it is encouraging to see the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear test-ban treaty, which ceased to function seven years ago resuming its work in the month of July, and we hope that it will make progress speedily in the activities and make up for the time that has been lost.

(Mr. Ri Tcheul, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Thirdly, the nuclear weapon States should furnish more specific guarantees not to use nuclear weapons against States which do not have such weapons.

Aware of the anxiety of the latter requesting guarantees of non-use, the former make a general promise. Consequently, there is no reason not to accept the request for a bilateral and regional guarantee of non-use made by certain non-nuclear-weapon States which are exposed to a real nuclear threat in a particular situation.

The proposal to create nuclear-free peace zones made mainly by non-nuclear-weapon States in various parts of the world is no less important than the reduction of nuclear weapons among the nuclear-weapon States.

Such efforts should be given due attention by the Conference on Disarmament and should always be encouraged.

The Fourth Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will be opening soon, will provide an important opportunity to strengthen that treaty and respond to requests for nuclear disarmament made in a changed climate.

Mr. President, along with demand for improving the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, demand is increasing for discussion of regional problems. This results from a reality which calls for urgent solution of regional problems both for the achievement of general and complete disarmament and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The situation in the Korean peninsula, however, has not seen any radical change even today, when divided countries are being reunited and prolonged disputes in varius regions are now being settled through negotiations and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

It is well known that the situation in the Korean peninsula remains one of the world's tensest confrontations and that it is threatening international peace and security, to say nothing of the peace and security of the Asia and Pacific region. Koreans are living in this state of anxiety, whether in the North or the South or abroad, and all want peace in Korea and national reunification, which will put an end to this tension and to all kinds of misfortunes.

To overcome these obstacles the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put forward a five-point unification proposal last April consisting essentially of détente, freedom to travel, a general opening and negotiations, and, on 31 May last, made a new disarmament proposal. This new proposal has been circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1007) and can be summarized as follows:

First, confidence-building measures between North and South: Limitation of military exercises; conversion of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) along the military demarcation line (MDL) into a zone of peace; measures to prevent accidental conflict.

(Mr. Ri Tcheul, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Secondly, measures to reduce North-South armed forces: Reduction of respective armed forces to less than 100,000 men in three phases over three to four years; cessation of qualitative improvement of military equipment; informing one another of reductions of armed forces and their verification.

Thirdly, measures for withdrawal of foreign armed forces: Conversion of the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone; complete, phased withdrawal of foreign troops.

Fourthly, measures to guarantee peace after disarmament: Deployment of a neutral nations' inspection force in the demilitarized zone along the MDL; formation of a North-South joint military committee; adoption of a North-South declaration of non-aggression.

Our new disarmament proposal, which is based on the earlier proposals, has some special features.

First, it provides realistic means for effectively ensuring peace in the peninsula and settling the problem of peace in a short time. Secondly, it contains much of what has been proposed by the United States and the South Korean authorities, including confidence building. Thirdly, it first seeks to settle the problems between North and South that can be resolved under present conditions, when negotiations have not yet been held between ourselves and the United States, the latter being involved in Korean affairs. We hope to sit down at the same table with the United States to discuss disarmament in Korea. Fourthly, it opens the way to a definitive solution of the Korean question, while also providing for the phased withdrawal of foreign troops.

This proposal will open a breach for the cause of reunification of the Korean peninsula and will give great impetus to attenuation of the situation in Asia and the Pacific.

It is encouraging that the United States and the South Korean authorities have shown a positive attitude to our proposal, thereby making it possible to discuss disarmament in high-level talks between delegations of North and South Korea led by the Prime Ministers. It is the first time in North-South relations that military representatives will be present at high-level North-South negotiations and that the question of disarmament will be a priority item on the agenda. If these negotiations are successful, a brake will be applied to the increase in armaments in the Korean peninsula, confidence will be strengthened and tension will rapidly be reduced. Both during the Cold War and at present, when the main trend is characterized by dialogue and détente, my Government has practised its invariable policy of pursuing by way of negotiations a peaceful solution to the Korean question and has made all sincere efforts for its implementation.

Mr. President, at the current summer session, during which discussions have been held in keeping with the development of the situation, differences of opinion have greatly diminished and a certain amount of progress has been made. Nevertheless, the Conference on Disarmament is faced with some new problems, including regional problems which require increasingly urgent solutions along with the more thorough discussion of regular agenda items. My delegation as a non-member State assures you that in future it will participate actively in the work of the Conference and it will do everything in its power to contribute to its success.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador Ri Tcheul, for his statement and for his kind words regarding the President. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Switzerland, Mr. Ochsner.

Mr. OCHSNER (Switzerland): Mr. President, first of all please accept our delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency during the month of August.

We can hardly ignore major events outside of the conference room and continue as if nothing has happened. While we were quietly doing our paperwork, the situation in the Middle East has seriously deteriorated in a way that discussions on the details of a chemical weapons convention could become partially obsolete for the time being. Once the situation is redressed however - a difficult and dangerous process to be carried out by people other than by disarmament and arms control specialists of diplomacy - it could be indicated to continue the negotiations, and we will need an inventory of what has been accomplished hitherto. Some political obstacles may hopefully have been removed by then. That is why from our point of view the Conference has to finish its work of the 1990 session in the field of chemical weapons according to pre-planned dispositions whatever happens.

Mr. President, being close to the end of my assignment as an observer to the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to give you some personal opinions and confine my intervention just to two points - in the field of the chemical weapons sector and the role of non-Members - points of practical significance, and I would be very much obliged to you if you would be kind enough to allow me the floor for a couple of minutes.

Beforehand, however, I set great importance on expressing my delegation's gratitude to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on item 4, Ambassador Hyltenius, for having conducted this session's work with much competence and perseverance and, in addition, for having continued the tradition created by his predecessor, Ambassador Morel, of holding contact meetings with the non-Member States - which, indeed, must appear most indicated in view of their increased number and the declared goal of universality of the chemical weapons convention. Furthermore, we think that the most useful role played by the Swedish delegation, above all in the CW negotiations, deserves full recognition and shows clearly that the size of the population of a country does not necessarily reflect its possibilities or its limitations of making a precious contribution in a particular matter of worldwide interest. I can only regret that it was not practical for us to give more support to the Committee's endeavours. For small delegations with a rather modest back-up it is, as a matter of fact, quite a demanding task to serve this Conference effectively, particularly in technical matters, and not to content themselves with mere talking. That is why, admittedly a little bit late, we are striving to make a build-up, and that is, on the other hand, also the reason why our delegation has, up to this day, rarely asked for the floor in order to avoid needless delay.

(Mr. Ochsner, Switzerland)

Now to the points I would like to bring forward in all due brevity. First, a word on the state of our work in the light of the political goal No. 1 of a possible CW convention, namely universality. As every newcomer realizes nearly right from the beginning, multilateral negotiations on an extremely complex and complicated matter require from everybody, particularly from the working group leaders, and the chairman, a patience going far beyond imagination. To bring about a consensus of 40 States parties appears sometimes nearly impossible particularly if no deviation from the ordinary diplomatic rites, as for instance advance inquiries, is permitted.

The situation becomes even more delicate if universality of the convention is envisaged, because this would actually require the approval of States non-members of the Conference, since complete adherence is one of the main concerns.

Nevertheless, a certain number of topics could be brought ashore this year, and numerous subjects are in a high degree of maturity. But on the whole, despite intensive efforts, relatively little has been achieved. Ambassador Morel in his last week's brilliant analysis of the future path to take has rightly pointed out, in our view, that general hesitation has got hold of the Committee. Indeed, an atmosphere of confidence has not been established to a sufficient degree and the feeling that we are sitting in the same boat has up to now not seemed to prevail everywhere. A considerable amount of optimism is required to sustain the belief that the convention in its present contours could be finished by end of next year if the continuing slow chessplay is perpetuated.

One of the root causes of our difficulties lies in the behaviour of States feeling themselves not in a situation permitting their renunciation of chemical weapons or, at least, of an option, and this must inevitably produce reactions of the great Powers - namely to maintain security stocks.

The problem is how to bring about a change, how to get out of the vicious circle.

Ambassador Morel's recommendation, based on similar ideas originated earlier, is to use the tool of a ministerial conference, a well-known political instrument to get the impetus for the final phase. In order to be precise, I quote in French: (translated from French)

> "We therefore propose that the Conference begin its next session in January 1991 by meeting at the ministerial level to examine the status of the negotiations at that time, identify the approaches needed to complete them, set a relatively short time-limit and give the corresponding instructions to delegations. The latter would then get down to work with the conclusion of a final agreement clearly in mind and would negotiate under the ministers' direct control." (CD/PV.570, p.16)

(Continued in English)

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, there can be no doubt that this is, at this particular time, the logical approach to the solution.

(Mr. Ochsner, Switzerland)

The problem will be in what way the ministers will establish the guidelines or instructions for their delegations. Will they be able and ready to give appropriate guidelines offering sufficient freedom of action? Will they be able to roughly co-ordinate their directives before the negotiators - you - will be sent back to work? The ministers will presumably be advised by the same specialists who are in charge of formulating your instructions. I have been at the job now for quite some time and have observed that many delegations, and among them very influential ones, are working under remote-control conditions, so to say, which does not facilitate speedy results. But, as the chances of a rapprochement have probably improved in this sector in the meantime, it should consequently be easier to give broadminded instructions. It will be crucial to create the best possible conditions for the 1991 session - the session of the expected breakthrough in many fields.

My second point, if you permit, is this. In view of the desirability or even necessity of universal adherence, a better integration of the non-member States appears indispensable. Although the possibilities for participating in the Conference have been de facto enlarged, the interest in contributing to the outcome of the negotiations has stayed rather modest, the well-known outriders or forerriders excepted. In the last non-members meeting of 1 August, just 12 out of 38 delegations showed up, particularly those which are attending the meetings anyway. The number of non-member States admitted to follow the negotiations as such is not yet a guarantee of their co-operation and even less of their readiness to sign the convention. Efforts from both sides are required to get more participation.

Maybe the present non-member status will remain unsatisfactory as long as non-member countries have no access to the so-called regional groups and their opinions normally come to nothing, ending practically in smoke.

Some consideration should be given to this point. It would be of particular interest to know the bureau's philosophy in this respect. I have taken up this problem in apprehension of a possible negative outcome of the whole exercise rather than because we were suffering from the low profile of our country as a non-member State.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, time flies, and quite a number of key problems are still unresolved. But universality must be secured as soon as possible.

It might be of some help, under these circumstances, if all States of a certain strategic importance would show the flag, i.e. deliver a "declaration of intent" going beyond the Geneva Protocol already confirmed in January 1989 at the Paris Conference. The objection to such an enterprise, of course, will always be: What convention? But we think the work of the Committee has sufficiently progressed to identify the main obligations of the engagement to be entered into. Declared intentions - or obvious mental reservations - to make use of CWs must be denied at once - this is the minimum. What is the value of a declaration of intent? It is true that such an act is not legally binding, and the way to hell is paved with good intentions but it would not be so easy to justify the renunciation of a moral obligation.

(Mr. Ochsner, Switzerland)

My delegation therefore supports the idea of a simultaneous delivery of declarations as mentioned before, preferably at a meeting of foreign ministers of both member and non-member States of the Conference at the outset of the 1991 session, as already proposed by other delegations.

Those are some remarks by an observer who has had the opportunity of following the Conference's meetings over an extended period of time.

Although the drafting of the convention is not yet completed, Switzerland has already started with the first preparations for national implementation.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the assurance given by Secretary of State Jacobi that we are willing to undertake a special effort to support the preparatory conference. We can only hope to be requested to keep our promise in a foreseeable future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Switzerland for his statement and the kind words he had for the President. We have learned with regret that Mr. Ochsner will shortly leave our Conference. I am sure the Conference will join me in extending to him our best wishes for happiness in his future work and private life.

I shall now give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear-Weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, Ambassador Negrotto Cambiaso, who will introduce the report of the Ad Hoc Committee circulated under the symbol CD/1028.

Mr. NEGROTTO CAMBIASO (Italy): Mr. President, I would first like to renew the congratulations already conveyed to you by the Secretary-General of the Italian Foreign Ministry on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference for the current month, and to wish you all the best in the accomplishment of your important and delicate duties.

I would also like to thank the members of the Ad Hoc Committee and, in particular, the group co-ordinators and the delegation of China for their collaboration and understanding, as well as Mr. Bogomolov, the staff of the Secretariat and the excellent interpreters.

During the 1990 session, I was encouraged, in the attempt to find a solution, to follow a somewhat different way from the traditional one pursued in the past without any tangible results.

Therefore, I have had several personal meetings, carried out in intensive informal consultations with delegations and co-ordinators, with the aim of identifying common ground and a possible satisfying solution, with the additional awareness, this year, of the coming Fourth NPT Review Conference.

The results of the efforts jointly carried out by all the members of the Committee are contained in document CD/1028, which I have the pleasure of submitting today to the Conference on Disarmament for approval. Unfortunately, neither the efforts deployed in informal conversations nor subsequent discussions undertaken within the Committee have led to the identification of a common approach satisfactory to all.

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Italy)

Nevertheless, it was possible to identify common views - as pointed out in part IV of the report entitled "Conclusions and Recommendations" - on the importance of the many positive political changes under way. These are expected to have a bearing on the search for a common approach on the substance of negative assurances.

Against the aforementioned background the Ad Hoc Committee recommends to the Conference on Disarmament that ways and means should continue to be pursued in the light of ongoing and future developments. It was therefore generally agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established at the beginning of the 1991 session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for introducing the Committee's report and for the kind words he addressed to the President. I would like to thank him for the efforts he deployed in carrying out his task.

I have no other speakers on my list for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? It does not seem to be the case.

As indicated in our programme, the Conference will hold an informal meeting, immediately following the plenary, to start the first reading of the technical part of the Conference's annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. The English text of the relevant document (CD/WP.388) was placed in the pigeon-holes of delegations on 8 August. The text in the other official languages is available today.

After the informal meeting, if time permits, we shall continue considering the substantive paragraphs concerning item 2 and start consideration of the substantive paragraphs concerning item 3 of the Conference's agenda, which have been circulated as working documents CD/WP.391 and CD/WP.393, respectively.

The Secretariat today circulated the timetable of meetings that the Conference and its subsidiary bodies are to hold next week. The timetable has been drawn up in consultation with the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies and, as usual, it is intended for guidance only and can be modified if necessary. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Conference wishes to adopt the timetable.

It was so decided.

I have no other matters on today's agenda and I therefore intend to adjourn the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 14 August, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.